The Messenger



Issue 169
April
2026

Serving Gislingham, Mellis, Yaxley and the Thornhams

THE MESSENGER TEAM



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E-mailed or hand-written submissions always welcome.

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WELCOME TO THE MESSENGER



Welcome to the April issue!

This month's cover photo of St. Mary Magdalene Church in Thornham Magna was submitted by Jennifer Vaudrey from Thornham. It inspired me to feature the church in our 'Down Memory Lane' article on pages 18 & 19. Whilst I could only find one old photo from 1905, I did find some interesting history regarding the church which dates back to the Domesday Book of 1086!

As I compiled the varied list of forthcoming events on page 7, I couldn't help but reflect on what I wrote in my April 2020 editorial: "Sadly, due to the current medical emergency, forthcoming events have been cancelled."

So, let's be grateful that so many events are back on again, being organised by volunteers for our enjoyment and, in most cases, they raise funds for our village halls in the process.

Village halls are the beating heart of our communities — places where we gather for everything from coffee mornings and quiz nights to film nights and amateur dramatic productions. But many of these vital spaces are under serious threat in the UK.

According to figures from rural campaigners and local government reports, when energy prices soared a few years ago around 10% of village halls across the UK were forced to close. Groups, such as 'Action with Communities in Rural England' (ACRE), have warned that thousands more could be at risk as fuel costs soar again or if public support falters.

Our local halls are more than just buildings — they are where friendships are forged and local identity thrives. Yet keeping them open depends on all of us. Every ticket bought, every meeting attended, every cup of tea served helps to cover the heating bills and maintenance costs that keep the doors open.

So, next time there's a dance night, film night, bingo night or WI meeting at your village hall, why not go along? Take a friend. Enjoy the warmth — not just from the radiators, but from the community spirit that you'll be helping to keep alive.

Whilst not everyone reading this issue will reside in Yaxley, I would like to draw everyone's attention to the Yaxley Parish Council Notes on pages 14 & 15, as they provide information on proposed solar farms, new wheelie bins and pot holes that are relevant to all of us.

Please note, our next issue has an early deadline of Saturday 11th April for contributions to the May issue. Obviously, sooner is better if you want to ensure inclusion.

Finally, on behalf of the Messenger team, may we wish you all an enjoyable Easter.

Until next month,



Jeff Norman, Editor e) themessengereditorial@gmail.com

Cover photo: Thornham Magna Church. Taken by Jennifer Vaudrey



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DIARY & LOCAL EVENTS



APRIL:

Tuesday 7th April: Rural Coffee Caravan
- Mellis Memorial Hall: 10.00am-12.00 mid-day.

Saturday 11th April: Coffee morning & Book sale
- Gislingham Village Hall: 10.00am – 12 noon.

Saturday 11th April: Plant Sale
- Sylvan, Earlsford Road, Mellis: 11.00am – 3.00pm. See page 53 for details.

Saturday 11th April: Quiz Night
- Yaxley Village Hall: 7.00pm. See page 22 for details

Wednesday 15th April: Gislingham WI meeting. Speaker Robert Watson 'What the Butler saw - Behind the Scenes in Luxury Hotels' - Gislingham Village Hall: 7.30pm

Thurs 16th, Fri 17th, Sat 18th April: GVC Production at Gislingham Village Hall
- Gislingham Village Hall: 7.30pm. See page 45 for details

Friday 17th April: Film Night – 'The Choral'
- Thornhams Parish Hall: Tickets £6 pay on the door. See page 34 for more details.

Thursday 21st April: Mellis Memorial Hall AGM
- Mellis Memorial Hall: 6.00pm. See page 17 for details.

Friday 24th April: Movie Night – 'A Complete Unknown'
- Mellis Memorial Hall: 6.30pm for 7.00pm start. See page 16 for details.

Saturday 25th April: Bingo Night
- Gislingham Village Hall: Doors open 7.00pm. See page 20 for details.

Sunday 26th April: Sunday Breakfast Club with Donna Potter on 'Well Being of Dogs'
Thornhams Parish Hall: 10.00am. Tickets £10.00.
Booking essential at: breakfast@thornhams.org

Please note, any event changes after the magazine goes to print are updated on our Facebook page at: https://www.facebook.com/themessengergismeltho

SAVE THE DATES:

- **Saturday 2nd May: Thornham Magna Bowls Club Open Day – see page 27 for details**
- **Saturday 9th May: Dance Evening at Gislingham Village Hall (7.30pm)**
- **Saturday 9th May: Bingo Evening at Yaxley Village Hall. (7.00pm)**
- **Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th June: The Hidden Gardens of Mellis.**
- **Saturday 27th June: Gisfest at Gislingham Village Hall.**
- **Saturday 11th July: Gislingham village fete at Village Hall (1.00 pm to 4.00 pm)**
- **Saturday 8th August: Gislingham Garden, Arts and Produce Show.**

Our next issue is May 2026. The "What's On" Diary deadline is: Saturday 11th April

CLUBS, CLASSES & REGULAR EVENTS

GISLINGHAM

Chat & Craft Club: Gislingham Village Hall. 1st Wednesday of every month. 12.00-2.00pm. Contact: Elspeth Tranter on 07473 131841.

Baby and Tots Group for the Under 2's: Primary School (School Term time only)**.** Every Wednesday 9.45am – 11.00am. Contact Debbie Nicholls: 07762 116 335

Carpet Bowls Club: Village Hall. Every Monday 2.15pm to 4.15pm. £3.00 per session. All equipment provided.

Pilates Classes: Village Hall. Wednesdays 9.15am and 10.15am and also Thursdays 7.10pm. Becky Cruickshank: 07734 414151

Total Fitness: Village Hall. Every Thursday 6.15pm - 7.00pm. A cardio fitness class that can be adapted to all abilities. Becky Cruickshank: 07734 414151

Gislingham WI: Village Hall. Meet the third Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm. New members welcome. For more details contact Margaret: 01379 783903 or Terrie: 01379 788521.

Gislingham Silver Band: Band Hut. Tuesdays 7.30pm - 9.30pm. Contact Iris Debock: 01379 788066 or debock.iris@gmail.com

Yoga Classes: Gislingham Village Hall. Tuesdays 7.00pm - 8.30pm And via zoom on Thursdays 7.00pm – 8.00pm. Both term time only Contact Clare Hall on 07704 570877 or email: thornhamyoga@yahoo.com

Gislingham Variety Club:
A local multi-talented group who perform twice a year in the Village Hall. If you are interested to join us, please contact by email: gislinghamvariety@gmail.com

THORNHAM

parkrun: Thornham Walks
Every Saturday at 9.00am. 5k. www.parkrun.org.uk/thornhamwalks/

Pilates Classes: Parish Hall every Tuesday.
Sit to Stand Pilates – 10.00am.
Pilates – Strong, Stretch, Relax – 11.30am
For information please contact: Michelle 07572 500465 or via email: hello@yapl.co.uk.

Thornham Bowls Club: Thornham Road. New Members welcome.
For more details contact Keith: 01379 871881

Bellringing: Thornham Magna Church. Mondays 7.30pm – 9.00pm. For details contact Sylvie: 01379 788130

Mellis Cricket Club plays at Thornham Estate
Saturdays and Sundays (May to Sept.) New Players phone: James on 07789 111165 or email: jameshkw@icloud.com

MELLIS

Circuit Training Fitness Class: Memorial Hall. Mondays 7.30pm – 8.30pm
Gus: T: 01379 788506 or 07716 118235 / anguswilkinson@btinternet.com

Scentwork for Dogs
Meetings on Tuesdays 2.00pm – 3.00pm at Mellis Memorial Hall
Further details: 07725 567110 or email: info@trailingtails.co.uk

YAXLEY

Pilates Classes: Village Hall. Mondays 9.30am. Becky Cruickshank: 07734 414151

The Art Club
Meetings on Tuesdays 10.00am to 12 noon once weekly at Yaxley Village Hall
All abilities are welcome. £4.00 per session. Come and create something artistic
Further details: Glyn Owens 07768 026065 or email: gavowens@aol.com

The Garden Club
Thursday 2nd April: Afternoon Visit to Hillcrest Nursery, Stanton IP31 2DU
More details: Abby Brett: 01379 783984 or email: tony1andabby2@hotmail.com

Yaxley Needlework & Craft Group
Meetings on alternate Wednesdays (1st, 15th & 29th April) from 2.00pm to 4.00pm at Yaxley Village Hall - £2.50 per session
Finish old projects or start a new one – enjoy a chat and a cuppa!
Further details: Celia Armstrong 01379 788754 or email: celiaarmstrong@hotmail.co.uk

The Gislingham Village Hall Committee has organised

2 x Basic Life Support and Automated External Defibrillator Awareness Classes at the hall

on Thursday 9th April 2026
(09.30am to 12.30pm) and **(1.30pm to 4.30pm)**

The learning objectives of the class are as follows:-

- Understand the principles & guidelines of Basic Life Support (BLS)
- Conduct scene assessments and ensure safety
- Recognise and respond to critical conditions
- Demonstrate effective cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for adults, children and infants
- Safely operate an automated external defibrillator (AED)
- Manage choking incidents appropriately
- Apply post resuscitation care and positioning techniques

If you are interested in attending one of the sessions, please contact Terry Williams on: 01379 783903 or **gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com**

Places will be given on a first come first served basis.

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HEATING OIL BEING STOLEN FROM HOMES IN SUFFOLK

Homeowners are having their heating oil stolen by thieves who are siphoning fuel from tanks in gardens and selling it on the black market, police have warned.

Households in rural areas are particularly vulnerable, with criminals exploiting the surge in prices by selling stolen fuel on the black market, according to reports from both Suffolk and Norfolk Police.





It comes as hundreds of people across the region have been unable to get hold of heating oil after having their orders cancelled by distributors. Customers of Norfolk-based Goff Petroleum, which delivers kerosene heating oil across East Anglia and the South East, have been told they will not receive their orders on time unless they pay a higher price to reflect current inflated fuel prices.

Customers say the cost of their heating oil has doubled and users are not protected by the energy price cap, unlike mains gas and electricity customers.

Mo Metcalf-Fisher, director of external affairs at the Countryside Alliance, said: "An oil tank can be drained within minutes. A tank that is not properly protected will make an easy target for thieves looking to make some quick cash. With oil being liquid gold right now, following theft preventative advice from local constabularies is essential."

Goff, based in Wymondham, has offered its customers various options. They can either keep their existing order to be delivered this month, but pay an amended price; cancel their order and receive a full refund if they paid in advance; or keep their existing order at the agreed price, which will only be delivered when Goff can purchase fuel at pre-conflict prices.

A statement on the Goff website reads: "Unfortunately, we are experiencing significant supply problems for kerosene heating oil due to the ongoing war in the Persian Gulf. The volatility of the global kerosene market has led to unprecedented price inflation, and shortage of supply. We only store one and a half to two days product and rely on daily collections from refineries bought at todays' prices. As we have no ability to control the price, we find ourselves in an unprecedented situation. We will do everything we can to maintain supply to our loyal and valued customers."

Police have issued the following guidance to help people prevent heating oil theft:

- Hide the location of the tank
- Fit your oil tank with a padlock or lockable filler cap
- Secure the oil tank within a cage
- Install lockable gates
- Fit an electronic gauge, which can activate an alarm when the oil level drops
- Fit security lights near to the oil tank location
- Fit CCTV cameras.

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DANCE EVENING AT GISLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL







I didn't quite know what to expect when I attended the above event on February 21st. Would it be a barn dance, tea dancing, a Zumba session or maybe a tap-dancing lesson?

Anyway, about 30 people turned up and started to occupy the tables set around the dance floor.

The village hall had been decorated beautifully, with disco lights, posters and balloons. We'd brought along our own snacks and drinks. None of us were quite sure what would happen next.

But then..... the sounds of "Boogie Wonderland" by the brilliant 'Earth, Wind and Fire' started up, and we were off!! Floor filler after floor filler was played, which meant most of us danced for the entire evening. It was a good old-fashioned disco!

Our ages ranged from teen to nonagenarian, but the music was a good variety of genres covering all decades. We had a few old favourites like "YMCA", to which everyone knew the actions, (of course!). There was a bit of Saturday "Night Fever" strutting, and also some very nifty 'Strictly' moves going on. A couple of brave souls even attempted some break dancing (- possibly fuelled by liquid refreshment!). And most people sung along to " Baggy Trousers" by 'Madness'! Plenty for everyone!

To me, the feeling was similar to the atmosphere of your favourite cousin's wedding - you turned up for a good, fun, relaxed evening. You knew most of the people there, and so you ended up dancing with everyone. We had Tony as our great DJ and Lana as our glamorous hostess - both of whom gave up their time and services for free.

So, a BIG thank you to Lana and Tony for a fantastic evening!

The next Dance Evening is planned for Saturday 9th May, 7.30pm - 10.00pm with hits from the 60s and 70s. There will be a £2 entry fee this time, to cover the cost of hall hire. Look out for the poster in the May issue of The Messenger!

Di Herbert

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Welcome to our



Baby & Tots' Group

Wednesday mornings

(term time only)

9.45 -11am

Gislingham Primary School

Come along for a cup of tea and a chat.

For more information contact Debbie: 07762 116335

YAXLEY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS





Yaxley Parish Council met on 18th February in a meeting that had been brought forward a week owing to an immovable deadline within which to comment to the National Planning Inspectorate on the Eco Power Project. This is a solar farm with Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a connection to the existing National Grid electricity substation at Leys Lane, Yaxley, Suffolk. The proposed development is expected to have a generation capacity of around 250 MW and 11 gigawatt hours of energy storage. The proposed development site is approximately 600 hectares (731 full size football pitches) in size, predominantly across five solar array areas situated around the Yaxley substation (on separate land parcels to the southwest of Stuston, northeast of Eye, north of Gislingham, north of Occold, and southwest of Thrandeston). The proposed development would also include cable route corridors (connecting the solar array areas and new substation to the Yaxley substation).

The Parish Council decided to object to this vast project at great length. In summary our main grounds for opposition to the project were:

- Fire risk of large battery storage areas
- Lack of strategic planning from multiple energy schemes hitting this area
- Effect on wildlife of such a vast scheme
- Disruption to farms, local amenities and heritage caused by ill-defined cable corridors
- Inadequacy of local roads to support such a scale of construction and maintenance
- Loss of top-quality agricultural land

We did list multiple mitigations in case – as is distinctly possible – the Planning Inspectorate ignore our objections and grant permission; all our comments may be viewed in due course on the Planning Inspectorate website.

Bomber Hard Stand (Opposite the Roy Humphrey Complex on the A140)

The hard stand is a substantial concrete pad built to carry B24 and B17 bombers under full bomb and fuel load in the Second World War. It is owned by Yaxley Parish Council and is currently rented by highway contractor Hazell and Jefferies to store aggregates for road mending. It has also been used under a commercial arrangement to provide direct construction access during the building of the Yaxley sub-station and synchronous condenser I mentioned in last month's article.

The Parish Council and the contractor have been worried by the spread of spoil heaps, fly tipping and theft of materials from this area. One of our councillors with great experience was able to negotiate a deal whereby the contractor would tidy and secure the area whilst maintaining access for agricultural access in return for waiver of rent over a period of time. The result so far has been a great improvement in the appearance of the site and we thank Hazell and Jefferies for this.

Chicken Processing Factory

There is a mixed story here. The Parish Council has received multiple complaints about smell from the factory under certain atmospheric conditions. This is not the only source of smell from the east of Yaxley, which can cause confusion, but the early mornings in particular seem to have been tainted by the distinct smell of poultry processing. Individuals are encouraged to report smells direct to the Company for investigations on 01482 275000 and let the Parish Clerk know,

for his records. However, because of the number of recent complaints to it, the Parish Council will be writing direct to the factory asking strongly for a solution to the problem. The company has assured us in the past it has increased its filtration several times, but a problem still clearly exists in hot weather or during high pressure atmospheric conditions.

On the other hand, the Company has recently fulfilled its obligation to provide tree cover for the site by planting a very large number of young trees and the Parish Council thanks them for this.



New Bins

You will have noticed the arrival of blue-lidded wheelie bins and grey food waste bins in Yaxley (and I'm sure in all villages covered by 'The Messenger') recently. Use of these will begin from 1st June 2026. Babergh and Mid Suffolk have published the following information:

'From June 2026, households will have more opportunities to recycle as part of nationwide changes to waste collections. These changes include: a new weekly food waste collection service - allowing residents to dispose of unusable and expired food items; extra items will be accepted in the recycling collection - including glass, cartons, and plastic bags, wrappings and films; a separate collection for paper and card; a new three-weekly collection schedule. Households will be provided with four collection services as standard: a weekly food waste collection; a three-weekly refuse (general rubbish) collection; a three-weekly paper and card collection; a three-weekly recycling collection for glass, plastics, metal, and cartons.'

Hopefully we'll all get used to the new system fairly quickly. Let's face it, we will have little choice. We are assured that detailed instructions will be sent out by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District councils before June and in the meantime many answers can be found at: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/future-changes-to-bin-collections

Potholes



In common with so many rural communities Yaxley is currently seeing an outbreak of significant potholes on its roads. These can be reported by individuals on https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/report-a-highways-issue (again, please let our Clerk know if you do this) but the Parish Council always reports holes brought to its attention or noticed by councillors. The problem is that a pothole has to be at least 4cm deep and 20cm wide before Highways will fix it. This leads to often absurd situations where developing potholes are ignored by repair teams on site in favour of ones that do meet the criteria; this always means that often the same team will be sent out a second or third time to the same location. Such a situation is now occurring on Mellis Road where only one of a series of three adjacent holes meets the criteria.

Despite all the problems dealt with and ongoing before the Parish Council, Yaxley remains a lovely place to live. As a city boy born in West Ham, I still get a real buzz from looking across fields and listening to birdsong every morning despite first coming up to East Anglia from Dagenham 48 years ago.

Thanks to all those who have taken the time to read my latest article. Happy Easter.

Ian Luff (Chairman, Yaxley Parish Council)


MOVIE NIGHT
at
Mellis Memorial Hall
A COMPLETE UNKNOWN
Friday 24th April 2026
Location
Mellis Memorial Hall
Free parking available
Tickets
£5 Adults | £3 Children
Available on the door
*Cash & card accepted
Refreshments
Tea, coffee & snacks available.
Feel free to bring cushions.
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6.30pm for 7.00pm start
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MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL
MELLIS, SUFFOLK

MELLIS VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Mellis Memorial Hall Management Committee

Registered Charity No.1081393

Notice of

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 21st April 2026 at 6.00pm

To be held at Mellis Memorial Hall

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approve minutes of AGM held 20th March 2025
3. Matters Arising
4. Chairmans report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Election of Committee for 2026/2027
7. Any other business

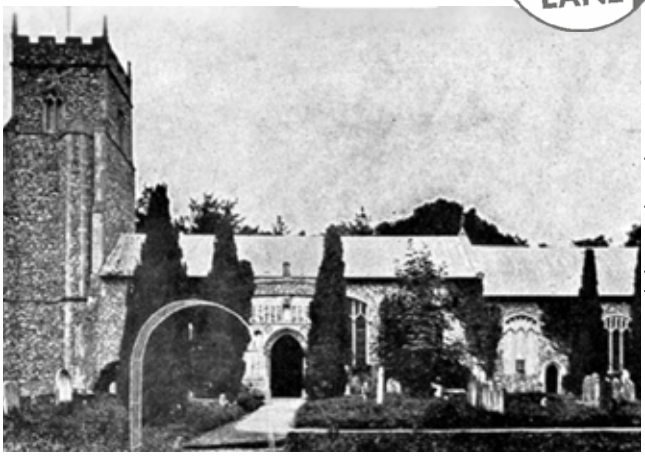
The AGM is an open meeting and members of the public are welcome to attend



ST. MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH, THORNHAM MAGNA

DOWN Memory LANE

The first record of a church comes from the Domesday Book of 1086, which seems to suggest that a single church served Thornham Parva and Thornham Magna, with Parva having two-thirds of the church and Magna the remaining third. That probably means that the recorded church is St Mary's in Thornham Parva.



St. Mary Magdalene Church c.1905

Thornham Magna gained its own church in the 12th century, but the earliest features of the present building date to the early 14th century. On either side of the 15th-century porch are re-used head stops from that 14th-century church. One depicts a bishop, probably Thomas Hemenhale, who died in 1337.



In the previous year the monks of Norwich elected Hemenhale as their new Bishop, but the Pope refused their selection and made him Bishop of Worcester. The arms of Norwich are carved above the bishop's head, giving a very precise date to the carving. On the other side of the archway is a head depicting a member of the Briseworth family, lords of the manor in 1336.

On the front face of the porch is a carved Green Man figure, and on either side of the arch are rather odd sexfoil symbols. Though the church was rebuilt in the 14th century and again in the Victorian period you can still see areas of Norman stonework in the chancel walls. The tower is 14th century, and you can still make out consecration crosses incised when the building was sanctified for worship.

There are funeral hatchments hanging on the walls. These are mainly to the Henniker family of Thornham Hall. The attractive

hammer-beam roof dates to the 15th century, though it has been heavily restored.

There are two fonts. At the west end of the nave, near the south door, is a Victorian font, probably a replacement for the original medieval font, now in the chancel. The simple medieval font was discarded from the church when the new one was installed, and was later discovered near the Walled Garden in the Park. It was brought back inside the church for preservation.

The Victorian restoration inserted several colourful stained-glass windows. Next to the organ is a window designed by Edward Burne-Jones and made by the famous William Morris studios. This striking window is easily one of the best Pre-Raphaelite works of art in any Suffolk church.



Most of the memorials are Victorian, including a wall monument to Hon. Major Henniker (d. 1842) by William Woodington, and a memorial to John (d. 1821) and Emily Henniker (d. 1819), sculpted by Josephus Kendrick. Kendrick is most famous (or infamous depending on your sensibilities) for his memorial to Sir William Myers (d. 1816) in St Paul's Cathedral. The Henniker memorial shows a pair of female figures in Greek robes, flanking an urn carved with profiles of the dead couple.

On either side of this large monument are small marble oval wall tablets, one to Dame E. and Sir J. Major, d.1780 and 1781 respectively, and the other to Dame A. Henniker, their daughter, who died in 1792.

There is also an elegant wall tablet to Robert Kelligrew, son of Thomas and Charlotte Kelligrew. Robert served as Page of Honour to Charles II and rose to become Brigadier General in the king's armies. He was killed in action at the Battle of Almanza in Spain on 14 April 1707.



Set into the chancel floor are 17th-century grave slabs to the Bokenham family and on the west wall of the nave, hangs a royal coat of arms to George II.

St Mary Magdalene is well worth visiting for the excellent memorials to the lords of the manor of Thornham Hall, especially the 19th-century monuments to the Henniker family.

Source material: www.britainexpress.com
Interior photos by Jeff Norman


GISLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL
BINGO
NIGHT!
BINGO
7 14 23 14
10 28 51 68
20 29 42 68
21
6
3
SATURDAY 25th APRIL
Doors Open 7pm
Eyes Down 7:30pm
BRING YOUR OWN REFRESHMENTS!
RAFFLE!

NEWS FROM GISLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall Committee have organised two Basic Life Support and Automated External Defibrillator Awareness Classes at the hall on Thursday 9th April 2026, commencing at 0930 and 1330. If you would like to attend, please contact Terry Williams at gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com or 01379 83903. Details of the course can be found on Page 7.

FUTURE EVENTS

Saturday 25th April 2026: Bingo Night - Eyes down at 7.30 pm. This will be a family event; children will be admitted provided they are accompanied by an adult. Entry will be free. Bring your own drinks and glasses

Saturday 27th June: Gisfest - Details to follow

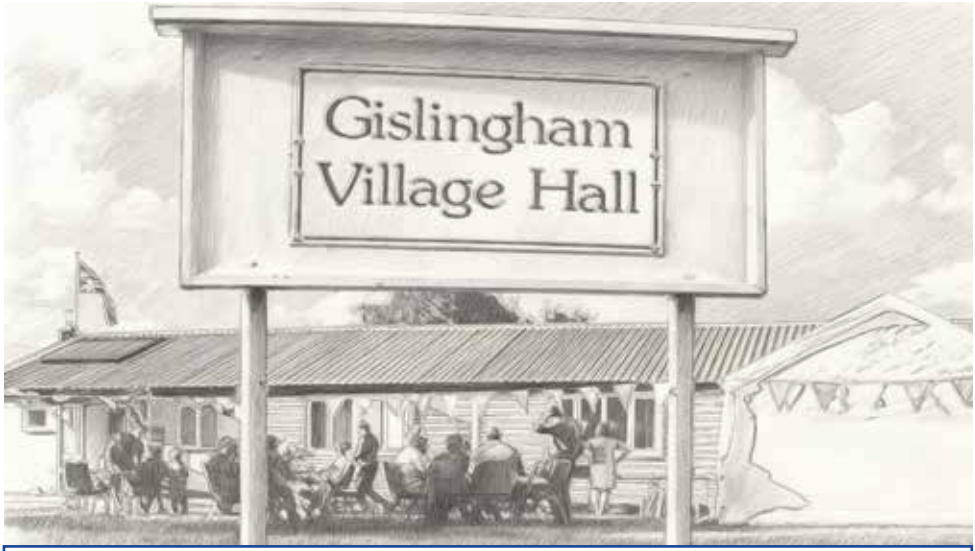
Saturday 25th July: Quiz Night - Watch this space for details.

Saturday 22nd August: Jumble Sale - Watch this space for details.

Saturday 12th September: Quiz Night- Watch this space for details.

Saturday 17th October: Bingo Night - Watch this space for details.

Saturday 12th December: Quiz Night - Watch this space for details.



The Hall is available for hire at a cost of £10 per hour, which includes tables, chairs, lighting, heating, water etc. There are also village hall assets available for hire at an additional cost. These include, a sound system and a large screen television. Additionally, there are tables and chairs and a marquee which can be used outside of the hall.

Follow us at www.facebook.com/GislinghamVillageHall/
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Yaxley Village Hall

Old Ipswich Road, Yaxley IP23 8BT

Presents

Quiz Night

On Saturday, 11th April 2026 from 7pm

With a guest Quizmaster James Holland

Entrance £3 pp and bring your own drinks and nibbles

Ideally, tables of 6

Cash prize for the winning team



and

Bingo

Bingo Evening

Saturday, 9th May 2026 from 7 for 7.30pm

With a guest Caller John Hawes

Bingo Books £1 each or 6 for £5

Bring your own drinks and nibbles for a fun evening with great prizes

YAXLEY VILLAGE HALL NEWS





The Committee is working hard on the Village Hall's Centenary Celebration weekend which will be held at the beginning of September '26. So far, we can confirm that there will be a small exhibition of the Hall's 100 years in Yaxley, curated by the Village's historian John Hawes, there will be a Magic Show for your children, a Grand Raffle where local businesses will contribute a prize, and much, much more. Watch this space!

Remember, the Hall is available to hire for your event at a very reasonable all-inclusive rate for your family celebration, club or party. Just ring the Booking Secretary on 01379 788754.

You may already be aware that The Hall is run by a committee currently made up of 8 members. We are planning to hold a Quiz Night on Saturday, 11th April with a guest Quizmaster, James Holland and on the 9th May there will be a Bingo evening. We do hope you will be able to come along to support the Hall.

Our committee would like to organise more events to support the Hall and we are looking for volunteers who would like to join us to help us. If you have an hour or so a month to spare and would like to assist us in running the Hall then please get in touch with Gill Stone (Chairperson) gill.ianstone@yahoo.com.

Also, our Treasurer will be retiring shortly so we are looking for someone to take over the role as soon as possible. If you have the relevant experience to take over from him, please e-mail i.muir@btinternet.com.

HIRE OF YAXLEY VILLAGE HALL
To book or enquire, please contact Celia Armstrong on 01379 788754 or by email: celiaarmstrong@hotmail.co.uk

Thornhams Film Night
Friday, 17th April 7:30pm

The Choral



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NEWS FROM THORNHAM PARISH HALL



FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

Friday 24th April: Film Night – 'The Choral'
Bookings: films@thornhams.org Tickets £6 pay on the door.

Sunday 26th April: Sunday Breakfast Club with Donna Potter on 'Well Being of Dogs'
Thornhams Parish Hall: 10.00am. Tickets £10.00.
Booking essential at: breakfast@thornhams.org

Friday 15th May: Film Night - details tbc

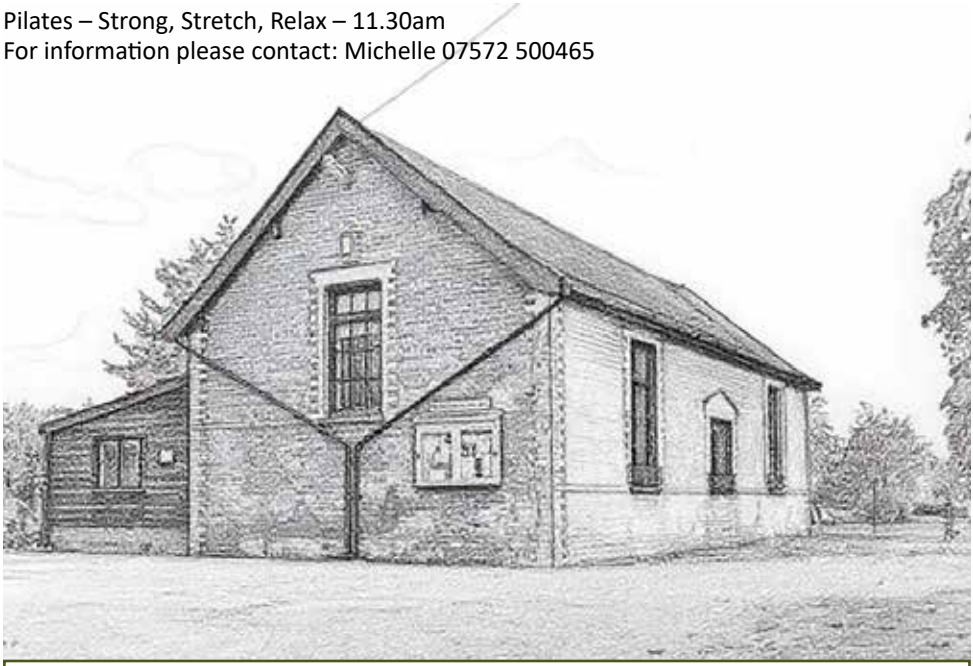
Friday 19th June: Film Night - details tbc

Saturday 27th June: Live screening Royal Ascot - details tbc

Sunday 5th July: Sunday Breakfast Club - details tbc

REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS:

Tuesdays:
Sit to Stand Pilates – 10.00am.
Pilates – Strong, Stretch, Relax – 11.30am
For information please contact: Michelle 07572 500465



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Also, we have an open day on Saturday 2nd May from 10.00am
The address of the Bowls Club is, Gislingham Road, Thornham Magna, IP23 8HH
(Opposite the estate farm entrance)
(Just come with flat shoes, everything else will be provided)

If you can't make the 2nd May and you are interested, come and give it a try, we will be there every Saturday morning from 10-00am to 1-00pm, May to September.



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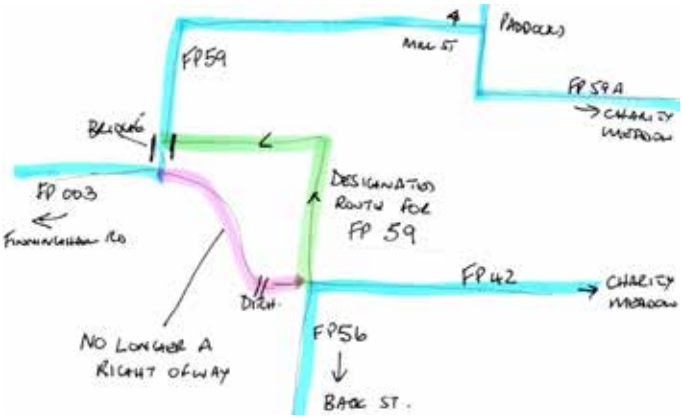
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GISLINGHAM FOOTPATH REPORT – MARCH 2026



Footpath Diversion

I have been asked a few times if a bridge could be built over a ditch on FP42 where it meets FP003 & FP59. The ditch was getting deeper and more difficult to cross. I contacted the SCC PROW Officer and we inspected the site just before Christmas armed with the definitive footpath map.







Upon closer inspection, it transpired that the path being used via the ditch is not the correct footpath.

FP42 starts at Charity Meadow, crosses the field and, just after a sleeper bridge, joins FP59 & FP56.

The old sign, which pointed to FP56 and Back St., was hidden in the hedge but FP59 should have gone through the hedge and followed the hedge around to the wooden footbridge.

The SCC contractors have now cleared the hedge and erected a new finger post highlighting the correct route of FP59. There is also a finger post on the corner of the hedge directing to the footbridge. It would be greatly appreciated if walkers will now use the correct route and not via the ditch.

Dog Mess

Following the approval from the Parish Council, I have been attaching signs to finger posts and also some signs on stakes to highlight that 'It is an offence not to clear up after your dog'. In the beginning, a dog walker thought it would be fun to remove the posts, however, they have now been replaced a bit more permanently. It is a real shame that the other day I walked over two miles of our footpaths and did not observe any dog mess. Unfortunately, when I got to the short footpath from Mill St. to the Charity Meadow, I had to spray 5 lots and I reckon some from the same dog. We also have a similar issue with the footpath from Coldham Lane going around the field.

Hopefully, with the signs in place and the offending sprayed dog mess, dog owners will get the message that to not pick up is very antisocial and also an offence.

Martyn Bryant, Gislingham Footpath Warden

CIRCULAR WALK AROUND HISTORICAL DEBENHAM

O/S Explorer Map – 211 / What 3 Words – ///sleep.headset.coverings
Distance - approx.4 miles/7.25 kms

The name 'Debenham' comes from an Old English term meaning a settlement in a deep valley. The area was settled as early as the Iron Age when the Celtic tribe known as the Trinovantes gathered at the source of the river to elect their king. The Romans established a settlement here but this was destroyed during the revolt led by Queen Boadicea in AD 60.

What makes the village so attractive is its large number of historical buildings. There are 94 listed buildings in Debenham, with 86 listed Grade II, seven listed Grade II*, and one, the parish church of St Mary's, listed Grade I by Historic England. The proliferation of ancient buildings led to the centre of Debenham being declared a conservation zone in 1970. As a result, the village exudes 'olde worlde' charm.

One such building is The Guildhall which was a former market hall, built in 1668. Opposite is Ancient House, a timber-framed building erected around 1540.

Start your walk

There are several parking places around the village, mainly on the roads and a small car park just past the Woolpack pub and in front of the River Cafe & Deli.



If you walk to the Coop Store in the centre of the village, this will be your starting point. On the opposite side of the road, you will see the 15th-century Wealden House with the addition of a Tudor rear wing and a second 16th-century cross wing. Next door is the now closed Angel pub, which is real shame, as it used to be busy.

Cross the road and turn right going up the hill. On the left is Swan House, a very interesting antiques and garden ornaments, which is worth a visit. At the junction of Gracechurch St on the left side is the Ancient House with the Guildhall opposite.





Continue along the pavement until you reach St Mary's Church which may date back to the late Saxon period, sometime around AD 1050, as evidenced by herringbone stonework in the tower base, and traditional long-and-short quoins in the tower walls. The tower arch, seen from inside the church, is a traditional late Saxon or early Norman design. One rare historical feature is a Galilee porch in the west wall.

When you enter the church, on the left is the very old steps going up to the bells, unfortunately, this is out of bounds. You will walk through the bell tower and if you look up, you will see the bell pulls. Through the attractive glass doors, you enter the main part of the church. We noticed the many kneel cushions, which appear to be personalised. Look for the ornately carved tomb of Sir Charles and Lady Dorothy Framlingham (c. 1595).



Leave the church and turn left. Go down the hill, continue until you reach Low Road on the right and follow this road, passing the Fire Station, until you are past all the houses. When you reach Maltings Farm, on your right is a FP post, cross over the concrete bridge and walk with the hedge on your right. At the end of the hedge, continue onwards, with the hedging now on your left. After about 100 metres, go through the gap straight ahead and continue along the path. This will lead to the rear of Debenham Sports Centre. Keep the hedging to your left and walk around the field, keeping the football pitch to your right. In the left corner of the field, you will see a gap and a small footpath that will take you to the main road next to the 'Debenham' sign.

Turn right and pass the Sports Centre and school. Cross over at the zebra crossing and continue until you reach a footpath sign on your left, next to a house called 'Hilly Filly'. Continue along this footpath until you reach a track, with a gate to your left and a wooden footbridge ahead of you. Cross this bridge and bear left across the field. At the end of the path, drop down onto another track, turn right and after a short distance the track bears left, so continue until you reach a road.

Turn left and follow the road until you reach Old Hall Farm. A beautiful house with a large pond at the front. Opposite is a footpath, more of a track with paddock fencing on the right. There is also a sign for 'Bryces Farm'. Continue along this track which opens out at onto the edge of the field. When you reach the end of the path, another sign for 'Bryces Farm', turn left and continue along this track.



Take the footbridge which leads onto a footpath which is elevated above the River Deben. This may have some water, but tends to be dry. This part of the path is in the cover of trees. Cross over a small railway sleeper bridge and continue along the path, which is now at the edge of an open space, still keeping the course of the Deben to your left. When you reach the farm yard, walk through until you reach the gate. You will notice this is where you crossed the wooden bridge earlier. The farm is 'Derrybrook Farm'.

Continue along the road back towards Debenham. At a crossroads, with a sign showing the 'Heart of Suffolk Cycle' route, turn right onto Chantry Lane. There are some very interesting houses and gardens to view. You will now arrive back at the starting point at the Coop.

For refreshments, the Woolpack serves a selection of beers and has a good menu, which also features pizzas. There are new tenants who arrived about 6 weeks ago. There is also the Deben Coffee House and River Green Cafe & Deli if you wanted a tea or coffee. An interesting shop is Swan House and Gardens as mentioned before, there is also a small second-hand book shop, fish & chip shop, newsagents, florist and butchers. The Lion pub has reopened and serves a good range of beers and an extensive menu.

Emma & Martyn Bryant

Historical information available from britainexpress.com

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NATURE NOTES by Darrel Charles



Hello everyone, welcome back to Nature Notes

I hope that you're happy to see that Spring has arrived - there seem to be daffodils flowering all over the place now, brightening up our gardens and roadsides and our mood. But when exactly does spring officially begin? It turns out that there are two definitions in use. The first is called meteorological spring and it begins on 1st March and ends on 31st May. The other three seasons follow on with three months being allocated to each. The second definition is called astronomical spring and is based upon the position of the Earth relative to the Sun and occurs when day and night are nearly of equal length. This happens around 20th March and after this date the number of daylight hours begins to rapidly increase. This day is called the spring equinox and happens when the sun is directly above the equator, an occasion celebrated each year by Druids at places like Stonehenge. Anyway, whichever way you look at it, spring is here!







Over at Mellis Primary School the teaching opportunities arising from the changing of the seasons are seized upon. Here's an account from their Headteacher, Paul Ryle, of a spring discovery lesson held last month.

Spring is slowly, reluctantly coming - but coming it is, as our Reception children found out when they undertook a recent expedition as part of their weekly 'Welly Wednesday'! This took place both in the expanses of Mellis' fields and woodlands and in the wonderful Mellis Gardens adjacent to the School. We had learned all about the way that trees give little clues of the onset of spring from their buds, and through the first blades and buds of daffodils and crocuses. We read a spring poem together in our woodlands, and took in a 'sound survey' while we did so – listening for all the birds, whose different songs and notes are also a sure sign that spring is on its way!

How marvellous for young children to be on outdoor adventure like this!

Last month, Christine and I enjoyed a short break to Amsterdam. One morning, we visited a place called Westerpark, an area of grassland with a lake close to the city centre. One of the first things we saw there was a Stork sitting on a nest on top of a tall chimney. This was something of a surprise as it was early in the year for Storks to be nesting. Perhaps it was an old nest it was checking out. Another surprise was to see many Grey Herons walking around amongst other visitors like ourselves. It was possible to approach these large birds to within 3 m or so - extraordinary! The other notable birds we saw in numbers were Green Parakeets, as may be seen in London parks and indeed, once in Gislingham a few years ago (actually that was identified as an Alexandrine Parakeet). These spectacular colourful birds made quite an impression with their long tails stretched out in flight and their accompanying loud squawking.









Cherry blossom

Returning to spring, its arrival marks another tradition - that of spring cleaning and here at home, that is what has been happening. That said, us nature lovers will no doubt have empathy with a favourite character from The Wind in the Willows, when the good-natured Mole loses patience with his work and exclaims, "Hang spring cleaning!" before leaving his underground home to explore the wonderful world above ground. I think it's tempting to follow Mole's example!

Until next time, happy wildlife watching!

See these and other photos at my Flickr site: flickr.com/photos/darrelphoto/

See Tony Clarke's monthly list of local bird sightings at The Messenger on Facebook.

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SAM FENDER - PEOPLE WATCHING
(DELUXE EDITON – 2CD SET)

I discovered 'People Watching' by Sam Fender almost by accident. After hearing "Reign Me In," Fender's aching duet with Olivia Dean —listening to Radio 2, on my drive to work in January, I was struck by the emotional clarity and rawness in Sam Fender's voice and Olivia Dean's stunning vocal.



That one song sent me down the rabbit hole — and what a discovery it's been.

Not knowing anything until then about Sam Fender or this particular song until then, I decided to do some homework to discover that the song features on the Deluxe edition of the Sam Fender album, 'People Watching'. The original album was released in February 2025 and then in December a "Deluxe Edition" was released that features eight additional songs, that includes duets with both Olivia Dean and Elton John. For £14.99 I decided it was worth a gamble!



Fender's voice has similarities to Bruce Springsteen and Mike Scott of The Waterboys. Musically, the album balances guitar-driven moments, pounding rhythms and choruses built to ricochet around arenas with more reflective, intimate passages. The guitars shimmer and snarl in equal measure and the drums drive everything. Fender's voice - rough-edged, impassioned, cuts clean through the noise.

For someone discovering Sam Fender for the first time, this album is a revelation. If "Reign Me In" was the doorway, People Watching is the full landscape — thoughtful, anthemic, and quietly profound. So, what started as casual curiosity quickly turned into full-blown admiration. Because this album doesn't just introduce itself. It grabs you by the collar.

On February 20th, after a remarkable 35-week journey up the charts, Sam Fender and Olivia Dean finally reached number one in the UK Singles Chart with "Rein Me In" and then on 28th February, the song won a BRIT award for 'Song of the Year'. "Rein Me In" stands out not only as a musical collaboration but as a testament to the power of patience, storytelling, and emotional resonance in modern music.

As I watched the awful Brit Awards on TV, (I only watched it, as I had read that Sam Fender and Olivia Dean had been nominated and there was no live football on TV), I took great pride in the fact that I actually owned and liked the 'Song of the Year' – But I don't intend to make a habit of it!

JAN

Author's Rating: ★★★★★ 4/5



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Gisfest 2026



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DI'S BOOK BLOG



"Strange Houses" by Uketsu

(Published 2021, with English translation 2025)

Bit of an unusual novel this time, my fellow readers.



You can't have failed to have noticed the sudden rise of interest in Japanese literature. They have literally been flooding the market as a trip to Waterstones will testify! Nothing wrong with that, especially if you like books involving cats, and coffee shops! But this book, one of a group of three, is unusual to say the least.

It's intriguing cover first attracted me and I initially dithered over whether to buy it. Eventually I did and I enjoyed it. (And I've since bought the other two books written by the same writer.) The enigmatic writer is known simply as "Uketsu" - only a handful of people know his true identity. But he is Japanese and is a best-selling author and Youtuber.

It starts with the author being contacted by a couple looking to buy, what you would think of as, a typical Japanese residential house.

There are various illustrations showing the floor plan of said house.

Nothing strange so far.

But then the author delves deeper in and starts to point out odd things about the house floor plans. This leads to questions such as.... What is that strange space? Why is the room that shape? Why does that room have no windows?

And slowly you find yourself drawn into an intriguing mystery that the author eventually solves. With themes of puzzles, mystery, murder and horror, it also gives us an interesting insight into Japanese family life and tradition.

Written from the author's point of view, the narration includes a series of conversations with the other characters. It cleverly involves us - the reader, in solving the mystery by investigating various clues. It's an easy read with logical progression. There are drawings on most pages to illustrate the point being discussed. (Helpful, as you don't have to keep flicking back and forth through the pages!)

I do hope you enjoy it, and that you don't suffer from a sleepless night after reading it!

Di Herbert


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TIP OFF, RIP OFF!



Suffolk Police are urging families, friends and neighbours to make their elderly relatives or vulnerable members of the community aware of courier fraud after two incidents were reported to police.

Courier fraud occurs when people are contacted by people pretending to be police officers or bank officials and duped into handing over money, valuables or bank cards, which are collected from their home address, often by couriers. The criminals use a variety of different tactics, often claiming that there is a problem with your account and they need your help to catch the real criminals.



The first incident occurred in the mid Suffolk area, the second incident in west Suffolk. Both involved a female victim aged in her 80s who are reported to have lost a significant sum of money. Police are urging residents to share this warning with elderly and vulnerable family members, friends and neighbours – but stress that anyone can fall victim to these sophisticated scams.

If you know of anyone that you feel might be susceptible to this, please help ensure they are aware of the dangers.

A police officer will never:

- Ask you for your bank details or PIN
- Ask you to transfer funds to another account
- Ask you to hand over cash or bank cards to a courier
- Ask you to pay a fine or a fee to them or a third party over the phone or online
- Ask you for access to your computer, passwords or log on details over the phone or online
- Ask you to 'assist' in an investigation by doing any of the above

Examples of courier fraud include:

A scammer calling you, claiming to be from your bank or a police officer. They tell you either that:

a fraudulent payment has been spotted on your card that needs sorting out someone has been arrested using your details and cards.

You may be asked to call your bank using the phone number on the back of your card. This convinces you that the call is genuine. But the scammer has kept the line open at their end, so when you make the call, you're unknowingly connected straight back to them or their friends.

They'll either ask you for your PIN or ask you to key it into your phone. No bank or other legitimate service will ever ask you for your PIN. The scammer then sends a courier or taxi to pick up the card from your home. Even the driver may not know they're being used as part of the scam. Once the scammer has both your card and PIN they can spend your money.

A different version of this scam is where you're contacted and told there's a corrupt member of staff at your bank or post office and the police need your help to identify them.

They ask you to withdraw a large sum of your money, which the police or bank will mark, then put back into the banking system. They say this will help them identify the corrupt person. Once you hand the cash over, the scammers simply take it.

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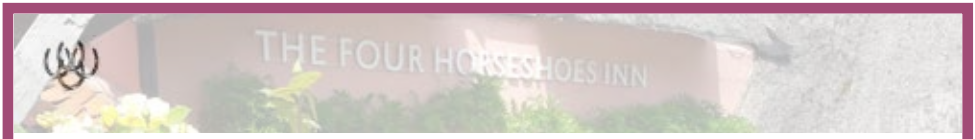
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All applications are treated in the strictest confidence and in accordance with GDPR Data Protection Regulations.

GUC Trustees meeting dates for 2026 are as follows: 8 May, 10 July, 11 September, 13 November.

Applications, together with the necessary supporting documentation, should be received **seven working days before the meetings** to allow Trustees time to consider applications and request additional information if required. In the event of emergency applications, Trustees will consider an application when received and, if necessary, will call a special meeting to review the application.

Application forms can be obtained from: The Clerk, Lilac Cottage, Mill Street, Gislingham, IP23 8JR
Tel: 01379 783380, Email: gislinghamunitedcharity@gmail.com
Or can be downloaded from the "Organisations" page on the Parish Council Website:
https://gislinghamparishcouncil.com/organisations/gislingham-united-charity/

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TERRAPIN NEWS



Spring is well and truly in the air, cricket nets, May Blossom, Snowdrops, Daffodils and pancakes. It is also the time for the District Council to take stock on last year and agree its budget for 2026/27. MSDC has now reviewed and reframed its capital investment programme as essential to:

- Supporting economic growth in towns and villages.
- Improving quality of life for residents.
- Balancing environmental priorities with development.
- Preparing for future local government reorganisation in Suffolk.

Although freezing Council Tax (for 2024/25) did not prevent ongoing investment in key infrastructure and regeneration due to strong financial planning. Going forward, the Council decided it would be prudent to increase its share of the Council Tax by 2.99%. For every £1.00 of council tax collected 8.7p is retained by Mid Suffolk, 4p goes to Parish Councils, 13p goes to the Police and Crime Commissioner, 74.3p goes to Suffolk County Council.

Mid Suffolk has a detailed Capital Investment Plan over the next three years, a sustained and aspirational investment strategy focussed on Town Centre Regeneration, Arts, Culture and Community Facilities, Leisure and Sports Facilities, Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and River Quality - including Flood Management, Housing and combatting homelessness, delivering “Better Recycling". The investments will be of long-term public benefit, and also to the public purse.

A local example: February’s launch of Mid Suffolk Council’s Catchment and Landscape Nature Recovery Fund of just over £500.000 will, in collaboration with the River Waveney Trust, have an impact on flood management in the upper River Waveney Catchment area.

Over the medium-term period, to 2030/31 gross expenditure is forecast to increase by £3.123m or 7.89% from the 2026/27 budget, due to expected pay awards, staff increments, and reallocation of officer time under the shared management arrangements. There will be unrecoverable costs due to LGA. Income over the same period is forecast to decrease by £2.759m or 6.41%. An aggregated gap of 14.3%.

These figures include the Council increasing Council Tax by 2.99% per annum from 2026/27 onwards and reflects a significant decline in government funding in 2029/30 and 2030/31. In the later years the ongoing expenditure needed to fund Council Services is far outstripping the Council’s recurring income resources from Business Rates, Council Tax, fees & charges, and government grants. The UK government is implementing major, multi-year reforms to local government funding. Key changes include reassessing funding needs to favour more deprived urban areas, and redistributing business rate growth, this has not been favourable to Mid Suffolk and is being challenged.

The council’s Section 151 Officer, (Every council, by law designates a professionally qualified senior officer as having legal responsibility to provide effective financial management and advice across the Council.) states the long-term position is challenging however, given the level of reserves the council continues to hold, the position remains financially sustainable.

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WHERE AM I? QUIZ

Below are seven clues as to where I am.

- I am older than the city that I'm named after.
- Elizabeth Taylor spent six of her eight honeymoons here.
- Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin held epic Rat Pack drinking sessions here.
- Howard Hughes kept a bungalow here, which these days costs £4,400 per night.
- Peter Finch, the actor died in my lobby.
- Marlene Dietrich helped overturn a rule that women must wear skirts here.
- I am featured on the cover of The Eagles album 'Hotel California.

The answer appears at the foot of page 63.

SUDOKU CHALLENGE

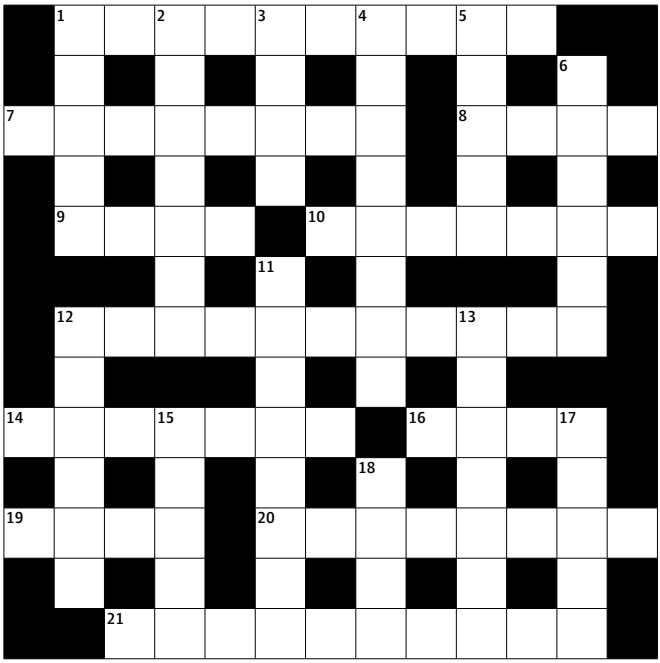
	9	3			8			6
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1				3		7		9
4		9						8
7			9			5	3	

Each 3 x 3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9

Last issue solution

1	6	7	3	2	4	5	9	8
3	9	4	1	5	8	2	7	6
2	5	8	9	7	6	4	3	1
4	2	5	7	1	3	6	8	9
7	1	9	6	8	2	3	4	5
8	3	6	5	4	9	1	2	7
9	7	3	4	6	1	8	5	2
5	8	1	2	3	7	9	6	4
6	4	2	8	9	5	7	1	3

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE



Across

1 Fish in Indian cuisine (6,4)
7 Painter's shade? (8)
8 Support – actor's thing (4)
9 Pay attention (4)
10 Medicinal sweet (7)
12 American folk music event with 'head' and 'side' couples (6,5)
14 Harmonium or organ keyboard (7)
16 Repeated passage (4)
19 Short informal message (4)
20 Describing sports drinks with similar concentration of salt and sugar to the body (8
21 Serviette holder (6,4)

Down

1 Showy (5)
2 Cloak (7)
3 Confederate (4)
4 Red cards – they're Forever? (8)
5 Area where woodland cut back (5)
6 Online searcher? (6)
11 Result of foul? (4,4)
12 Morose (6)
13 Kenyan capital (7)
15 String quartet member (5)
17 Chuck (5)
18 Welsh artist Augustus – US loo (4)

Last issue solution

■	H	I	B	E	R	N	A	T	E	S	■	
P	■	A	■	E	■	E	■	B	■	V	■	
R	E	S	P	E	C	T	■	R	E	I	N	S
O	■	T	■	S	■	A	■	U	■	D	■	A
P	E	E	P	■	S	I	M	P	L	E	S	T
E	■	■	■	Y	■	N	■	T	■	N	■	I
R	I	B	B	O	N	■	P	L	A	T	E	S
T	■	U	■	U	■	C	■	Y	■	■	■	F
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S	H	A	K	E	■	E	M	O	T	I	O	N
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NOTICES



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NEW POST OFFICE FOR EYE



It has been confirmed that a Post Office is returning to Eye. The owner of Mendlesham Post Office, Mr. Minesh Patel is already fitting out the unit and it is expected to open sometime in Spring.

STOWMARKET FOODBANK

The Foodbank is currently helping over 100 local families per month and your donations have made a big difference to many lives. Currently, the Foodbank needs the following items of foodstuffs every week:

Tinned / twin packs of sponge puddings. Instant / tinned potatoes. Twin packs of toilet rolls. Pasta 'n' Sauce packets. Savoury rice packets. Bottles of squash. Packets of cakes. Tinned hot meals. Jars of coffee. Part baked bread. Long life milk. Nappies size 6. Jars of jam. Hot chocolate. Jelly. Instant mash.

There is no longer a box for donations in the village shop however, a box is now available at the monthly Second-hand Book Sale and Coffee Morning run by Friends of St Mary's in the village hall. Also, donations can be dropped off at Milestones, Burgate Road, Gislingham, or if you would like your donation collected give Helen a call on 01379 783254.

Many thanks for your continued generosity.

Helen Neale

GISLINGHAM ALLOTMENT AND GARDEN ASSOCIATION (GAGA)



We still have one remaining vacant plot available - Spring being the perfect time to take on an allotment!

If you live in Gislingham and would like to have fun growing your own produce, fruit, veg or flowers, with like-minded, helpful and friendly neighbours, please give me a call on: 01379 788998 or by email: emma-ed@hotmail.co.uk

Emma Bryant

Answers to the Where Am I? Quiz on page 60. *The Beverly Hills Hotel*

SOUTH HARTISMERE BENEFICE



In June 2017, twenty-nine Coptic Christians, on a bus travelling to a monastery in Egypt, were murdered by Islamist terrorists. Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Bishop of London, issued a public statement. Two years earlier, following the killing of a group of Ethiopian Christians in Libya, he had called for prayer and forgiveness for the perpetrators. Now he went even further, in words addressed directly to the killers:

"You are loved. You are loved by God as your creator… You are loved by me, and millions like me, not for what you do, but because we believe in transformation…"

It was a remarkable refusal to be drawn into hatred or despair. And, strangely, it came back into my mind as the Epstein scandal unfolded.

The Epstein case was truly awful. The fear and degradation experienced by his victims is unimaginable - inflicted on them by men with great wealth, and an even greater sense of personal entitlement. Universal condemnation is entirely appropriate. Yet there was something about the tone of the public debate that caused me concern. I think it was the sense that some of the public figures who commented were enjoying this opportunity to parade their moral outrage. It can't always be much fun being in public life: your policies or motives constantly held up to suspicion or ridicule by your critics. So how understandable, once in a while, to rejoice in an issue on which you can express strong views, knowing you will receive moral support by all right-thinking people - understandable, but a million miles away from the open-hearted love expressed by Archbishop Angaelos.

It's a million miles, also, from the message of Easter. Easter, to use Archbishop Angaelos's phrase, is the celebration of transformation: a world of grief and loss is transformed into one of joy and hope; a world where might is right, is transformed into one in which the powerless have a say alongside the strong. It is a world in which God's love transforms everything.

I have just (in early March) heard the first in a series of broadcast Lent Talks on BBC Radio 4. This one was given by the head of a charity working with homelessness and deprivation in Wigan. Avoiding making judgements, she said, was vital in her work: it was irrelevant whether her clients were just unlucky, or had brought misfortune on themselves.

She concluded:

"Jesus does not save the world by deciding who deserves mercy. He saves it by giving mercy freely… Resurrection does not belong to the deserving; it belongs to the **wounded***."*

I think Archbishop Angaelos might agree.

"Alleluia, the Lord is Risen!
He is Risen indeed! Alleluia."

(Rev'd) Alan Harding

WEDNESDAY 1ST APRIL	Thornham Parva	7.00pm	Sung Compline
THURSDAY 2ND APRIL	Wortham	11.00am	Deanery Service
Maundy Thursday	Fressingfield	7.00pm	Deanery Service
FRIDAY 3RD APRIL	Gislingham	2.00pm	Stations of the Cross
Good Friday	Gislingham	3.00pm	Good Friday Liturgy
SATURDAY 4TH APRIL	Thorndon	7.30pm	Easter Eve Holy Communion
Easter Eve			
SUNDAY 5TH APRIL	Thornham Parva	10.30am	Benefice Holy Communion
Easter Day			
SUNDAY 12TH APRIL	Mellis	10.30am	Worship for All
2nd Sunday of Easter	Stoke Ash	10.30am	Holy Communion
SUNDAY 19TH APRIL	Thorndon	10.30am	Holy Communion
3rd Sunday of Easter	Thornham Parva	10.30am	Holy Communion
	Gislingham	3.00pm	God and Play
SUNDAY 26TH APRIL	Thornham Magna	10.30am	Mattins
4th Sunday of Easter	Wetheringsett	10.30am	Welcome to Worship for All
	Yaxley	10.30am	Holy Communion

Telephone Church BCP Holy Communion is on Thursdays at 11.00am

(Not on 2nd April)



Reverend Debbie Nicholls – Rector
rev.d.nicholls@gmail.com ✆ 07762 116 335

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LOCAL INFORMATION

BUS TIMETABLES

GISLINGHAM AND THORNHAM BUS TIMETABLE

Route No. VC0001: Gislingham to Stowmarket (Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays)
Leaves Gislingham 09.45 / Arrives Stowmarket, Bury Street 10.26. **Returns** from Stowmarket, Bury Street 13.00 / Arrives Gislingham 13.41

Fareline Bus 460 (Thursday only) from Eye to Stowmarket
Leaves Thornham Magna (Four Horseshoes) 09.25 / Gislingham (Shop) 09.31 / Stowmarket (Argos) 10.02. **Returns** from Stowmarket (Argos) 12.15 / Gislingham (Shop) 12.45 / Thornham Magna (Four Horseshoes) 12.52.

Simonds Bus 72 (Fridays only) Gislingham (via Thornham) to Diss
Leaves Gislingham Village Hall 09.30 / Thornham Magna Four Horseshoes 09.41 / Diss Bus Station 10.05. **Returns** from Diss Bus Station 13.00 / Thornham Magna Four Horseshoes 13.30 / Gislingham Village Hall 13.35.

MELLIS BUS TIMETABLE - https://www.simonds.co.uk/local-bus-times)
110 – Eye to Diss
Eye – Diss (Monday to Friday) – **leaves** Mellis, opp. Railway Tavern: 10.46
Diss – Eye (Monday to Friday) – **leaves** Diss, adj. Bus Station: 13.30



Post Van:
Yaxley
Fridays in the layby on Eye Road:
9.00am to 10.00am

Gislingham
Fridays at Village Hall:
12.15 – 14.15



Mobile Library: Gislingham
2026 visits will be on the following Wednesdays: 22 Apr, 20 May, 15 July, 12 Aug, 9 Sept, 7 Oct, 4 Nov, 2 Dec, 30 Dec.
Times: Broadfields Rd: 15.10-15.45
Mill St.: 15.50-6.05

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Anglian Water Emergency	0800 145145
Botesdale Health Centre	01379 898295
Citizens Advice Bureau Diss	01379 640530
Connecting Communities = Suffolk Passenger Transport	01449 614271
Crime Stoppers	0800 555111
District Council - Cllr. Rowland Warboys rowland.warboys@midsuffolk.gov.uk	01379 783412
Electricity Emergency	08007 838838
Essex & Suffolk Water Emergency	08457 820999
Eye Health Centre	01379 870689
Hall Bookings:	
Gislingham - Terry Williams: gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com	01379 783903
Mellis - Helen Timmons: bookmellishall@gmail.com	01379 783449
Yaxley - Celia Armstrong: celiaarmstrong@hotmail.co.uk	01379 788754
Thornham - Beth Fredrikssen-Jones: hallhire@thornhams.org	
Mendlesham Health Centre	01449 767722
Member of Parliament - Adrian Ramsey adrian.ramsay.mp@parliament.uk	07534 933356
Mind's support line - a safe place to talk about your mental health	0300 102 1234
NHS Direct	111
Parish Councils:	
Gislingham (Clerk): clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk	07833 705915
Mellis (Chairperson - Lawrie Read): mellisparishcouncil@gmail.com	01379 788248
Yaxley (Clerk): Philip.c.freeman@btinternet.com	01379 783203 / 07958 623897
Thornham Parva (Clerk - Christine Moore):	01379 783226
Rev'd Debbie Nicholls, Rector of South Hartismere Benefice rev.d.nicholls@gmail.com	07762 116 335
Suffolk Police (non-emergency)	101
Suffolk Doctors On Call	03001 303066
Suffolk Fire Service & Community Fire Safety	01473 260586
Suffolk County Council -Cllr Jessica Fleming jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk	01449 711065
Samaritans – for everyone:	116 123

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